

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

I am a permanent employee, working as a technician, currently earning around 29 per hour.

I am a renter . I am single and find it hard to imagine what it would be like to support a family on my humble wage. I get by, just. I am frugal and do not spend much money on myself. Just basics to get by yet I consider myself very lucky because I have a full time job. Many have to work seven days a week who do not get penalties just to survive whether they are self employed and are hugely disadvantaged for that. Many people I work with (and there are more and more of them) working on part time contracts or are casual and elect to work late nights and or weekends just in the vain hope of making a basic wage. This can only be achieved by penalty rates! Not everyone becomes a nine to five manager on very high salaries. These people on wages often have to work hours way above 38 hours a week due to the nature of

business demands. Yet their work can be of extreme importance to their company, obviously otherwise the company would not need them on weekends! They feel if they do not commit, because of their status (non permanent) are easily rid of and replaced by someone else who (may) do the work. Their home life is often pressured because of these demands to commit and consequently are doing overtime to make a descent take home pay for their families to survive. The place where I work has a 24/7 roster. That is I could be working at 3am on Wednesday morning, 9 to 5 on a Monday, 4pm to midnight on a Saturday, or say, up to midnight on Sunday. I see people on salaries who that double what I earn working 38 hours a week, have every night off and do not have to work weekends! I accept that politicians do work many long hard hours into the night and weekends as well. However, You are remunerated with generous salaries and parliamentary privileges. Do not equate your situation with the average worker who is making a quarter of what you do for doing the same kind of incredible hours for far less!

If penalty rates were abolished... I would as I have just looked on my payslip, YTD, lose one third (1/3) of my income! This is in black and white in front of me! The fact remains that my place of work need us on weekends. Our EA allows us to have one weekend off per month. So if you need me, pay me. I am missing out on quality time with friends and family.

My weekends are important to me because...because of time spent with my immediate family. When I was a casual employee I worked as many weekends as possible just to make ends meet. I missed many important things like my Grand Mother's 80th birthday. Alas she is no longer with us. I regret I did that! Because I have to work many weekends it is imperative to keep sane that I have at least one weekend a month to socialise with my family and friends. It is hard enough being able to meet these occasions without missing out. Why do you think they are called penalties?

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. I work hard and many of my friends who like me do the hours we do and commit like we do know that at least some remuneration encourages us to work hard during inordinate times, despite the fact that we could be missing out on quality family times a sporting or cultural event or God forbid, sleep! I live in a high rent area just so I can be close to my work in the CBD so I do not have to spend on high travel costs. The biggest cost is my time because of shift work, so I choose to be as close as possible. Others here live over 100k away because they save by having cheaper mortgages or rent outside of the metropolitan area! At what cost in the end however? If a business no matter how small or large cannot afford to pay it's workers on times outside of the norm then they should not operate during lean times. Believe me, I know retailers who are struggling during this economic climate, personally and I feel for them. However, if you create this precedent it will have a flow on effect to those companies which can support themselves nicely and will reap the benefits of underpaying their desperate staff and make their CEO's richer again as in today's headlines through this paltry productivity gain. Mr Xenophon, an outrageous proposal!

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Submitted by

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